

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

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P 221755 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3098

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2392

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, ES

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF LABOR ASKS FOR TERMINATION OF
AIFLD PROGRAM

1. THE MINISTER OF LABOR, DR. ROGELIO CHAVEZ, HAS NOTIFIED THE MISSION THAT THE AIFLD PROGRAM " IS NO LONGER CONSIDERED NECESSARY". IN A LETTER DATED JUNE 11 ADDRESSED TO THE USAID MISSION DIRECTOR, DR. CHAVEZ NOTED THAT UNDER THE SALVADORAN CONSTITUTION EDUCATION IS A RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE AND THAT THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERED THIS RESPONSIBILITY ONE WHICH MUST BE EXERCISED BY THE STATE ALONE. THE MINISTER RETURNED UNSIGNED THE PROJECT AGREEMENT WHICH HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO HIM IN MAY.

2. A BIT OVER HALF OF AIFLD' S EFFORTS IN EL SALVADOR DEAL WITH THE TRAINING OF CAMPESINO LEADERS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO A NATIONAL CAMPESINO ORGANIZATION, THE UNION COMUNAL SALVADORENA (UCS), WHICH WAS GENERATED THROUGH THIS TRAINING OVER THE YEARS. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH FORMALLY UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, THE PROGRAM IS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST TO THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WHICH HAS GIVEN THE UCS STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT. WHEN I INFORMED MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE ALVAREZ ON JUNE 12 THAT THE MINISTER OF LABOR WAS TERMINATING THE AIFLD PROGRAM, HE WAS SURPRISED

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AND UPSET, AND HE PROMISED TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER. ON JUNE 21 HE REPORTED THAT HE COULD NOT GET THE REMOVAL OF AIFLD REVERSED AS THE DECISION CAME FROM THE HIGHEST LEVELS.

3. ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO THE UCS BEGAN ASSISTING CAMPESINOS EVICTED FROM THEIR RENTED LANDS TO PREPARE THE PAPER WORK NECESSARY TO PRESENT THEIR CASES BEFORE APPROPRIATE COURTS. ABOUT SEVENTY CASES WERE PREPARED THROUGHOUT THE NATION AS A WHOLE. THIS DEMONSTRATION OF PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY SEEMS TO HAVE AROUSED CONSERVATIVES AMONG THE LANDHOLDERS (ESPECIALLY IN NTA ANA) AND AMONG SOME SECTORS OF THE MILITARY. ENEMIES OF THE UCS HAVE CRITICIZED AIFLD' S RELATIONS WITH THE ORGANIZATION AS UNWELCOME FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN SALVADORAN AFFAIRS. THE DECISION IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SYMPATHY OF THE MOLINA GOVERNMENT TO ARGUMENTS COUCHED IN NATIONALISTIC TERMS AND OF THE CONTINUING POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF CONSERVATIVE FORCES.

4. I WILL BE CALLING ON THE MINISTER OF LABOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY ELEMENTS OF THE AIFLD PROGRAM WHICH CAN BE SALVAGED.

5. DEPARTMENT PLEASE INFORM AID OF SUBSTANCE OF THIS MESSAGE.
CATTO

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